competition, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) introduced branding of POL products, for ensuring customer loyalty. Therefore, premium petrol obtained by adding additives to normal petrol at the supply location under different names was introduced by Oil Companies offering various advantages to the customers such as improving performance of the engine of their vehicle.

(c) The Government always encourages oil companies to upgrade products and services so as to benefit consumers. The introduction of premium grade petrol by oil companies is one such initiative that will benefit consumers as well as reduce vehicular pollution, thereby helping to conserve the environment.

Agreement on distribution of petroleum products

†2739. SHRI BASHISHTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of private companies besides public undertakings with which agreements for distribution/sale of petro-products have been made indicating the time period of these contracts;

(b) whether providing sale facility to private companies neglecting Government undertakings is justified; if not, the reasons therefore; and

(c) whether Government propose to reconsider the said agreement for giving preference to Government undertakings and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Government have granted authorization to market the transportation fuels in respect of four companies namely, M/s. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), M/s. Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), M/s. Reliance Industries Limtied (RIL) and M/s. Essar Oil Limited (EOL). These companies will set up Retail Outlets for sale of Motor Spirit (MS) and Highspeed Diesel (HSD) as per their commercial consideration and no time limit has been set up by the Government while granting authorization. Consequent upon the dismantling of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM), Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are also free to set up the LPG distributorship and Retail Outlets as per their commercial considerations in all the States.

Social welfare schemes of Oil PSUs

2740. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that PSUs under his Ministry have taken up activities related to welfare and economic development of SCs/ STs and other weaker sections residing in neighbourhood of projects; and

(b) if so, the details of such activities undertaken during the last three years, year-wise and PSU-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Oil PSUs have been undertaking various activities related tothe welfare and socio-economic development of weaker sections residing in the neighbourhood of project locations through Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan. These activities of oil PSUs during the last three years were by and large same in different parts of the country, which are as under:—

(i) Construction of community latrines on the lines of Sulabh Shouchalaya etc., in villages inhabited mainly by SCs/ STs and weaker sections of the society.

(ii) Construction of school/college buildings, scholarships, adult education, distribution of teaching materials, establishing library and other aid to SC/ST students.

(iii) Financial assistance to SC/ST women through co-operative societies for providing facilities of handlooms, weaving, etc., so as to enable them to have self employment.

(iv) Provision of drinking water facility to nearby villages through ring wells/tubewells etc.